



FUPC Presby Press

September 2022 Church Newsletter

First Wednesday Supper, September 7

Please come help to shape our relaunch for a new season of mission, ministries, and FUPC priorities

Our church leaders invite everyone to a special evening when we will brainstorm on how our congregation will move into a new year of programs, relationship building, and church activities. It begins with a First Wednesday Supper at 6:00 p.m. on September 7. Afterwards, we will have a brief presentation on opportunities to shape the year ahead. Then we will move into smaller groups to talk about how we can form the Ministry Teams which will coordinate our upcoming activities.

Elder Shari Gould told the congregation recently that “We are going to kick off some new energy. We are going to call it our post-Covid energy. We’re going to get excited because we need to get excited. We need to get out into the community, and we need to do what we do best.”

 Please watch video of Shari’s presentation on our website: <http://www.EdinboroPresby.org/videos>

Some traditional activities have been adapted or put on hold recently. Other ministries have continued well, sometimes using new methods to accomplish our timeless goals. There are also some new ways of Being Church which will be important for us to try.

This church has always had wonderful, ordained officers, and the group that is serving now has done a wonderful job leading us in the way of Christ during the adjustments and limitations of the past couple of years. However, our future fruitfulness will rely on participation from beyond the deacons and elders. A small handful of people can accomplish great things. (*Think of Jesus and his dozen primary disciples!*) A larger number of people can multiply the great things which God will do through Edinboro Presbyterian Church.

If you cannot attend this Wednesday evening, please speak up with your ideas, your wishes, your sense of the Lord’s nudgings, and your willingness to take part in something which aligns with your talents. If you aren’t sure where you would best fit in to this work, say that too. Our Ministry Teams can use your help – as a participant with a Team into the year ahead, with one specific project or activity, or simply with telling about your ideas that would be good to put high into our mix of priorities.

We will see you on Wednesday evening, September 7.

FUPC’s Ministry Teams (and contact people)

Fellowship (Linda Rummel)

Children & Youth Ministry (Brian Long & Milly Williams)

Mission (Jan Schulz)

Stewardship & Storytelling (Pauline Kraus)

Property (Doug Roberts)

Finance & Personnel (Shari Gould)

Worship (Sue Payne)

Bible Studies & Spiritual Growth (Greg Gillispie)

Technology (Greg Gillispie)

From the Pastor

Discerning our priorities for a “new” future // Discerning *God’s* priorities

We have a consensus among our leaders here that we are moving beyond the so-called “Covid Era”. I agree. When you and I look around the culture which surrounds us, that trend also seems obvious on the community and national/worldwide level. Not everyone is at the same place on this spectrum, and those who have chosen to move on – or move forward – *must* remain respectful of those who feel they are appropriate to live within the limitations of the past couple of years.

We at FUPC dare not simply “come out” of Covid. I am convinced that there are other vitally significant dynamics we also would do well to do. There is *healing* and *recovery* still to be done. We can *learn important lessons* from what we have learned about ourselves since March 2020. There is *reassurance* that we can go through challenges and accomplish goals despite setbacks and interruptions. We have *lived beyond our comfort zones* for so long, that we are free to start fresh and release habits and try new things.

In light of our upcoming First Wednesday and the relaunching of our Ministry Teams*, I hope we will ponder the lessons and discoveries of 2020 and 2021 and be informed and inspired by the new – and old! – opportunities before us. Points to ponder:

- Many folks have reoriented their priorities, sometimes narrowing them down.
- Many people have been more isolated than ever, and they crave meaningful contact with others. Because of the last two years, many people are feeling less confident and comfortable in social settings than they were before. (This week I listened to a helpful Youth Ministry Podcast which quoted research that this social uneasiness is especially pronounced among teenagers.)
- Some people who have been/felt “locked up” are ready to burst out, and really get going.
- Retailers (whether that is stores or restaurants or service-related businesses) have learned that success during Covid came by offering a menu to their customers of drive-up AND in-store AND delivery AND pick-up. Most will not go back to the former way, because consumers will stay with their newly favored options. *I would ask: what are the parallels for churches to offer ministries in all these varied retail methods?*
- Covid forced our hand, to change our routines and patterns. As awful as most of us have felt about the limits during these years, we have also learned to change. Yes, changing was forced upon us, but we did it. *What changes probably would have been good to do three years ago, but back then we weren’t ready to switch over to anything beyond the tried and true.*

This last point, that change happens with or without us, is central to Christian author Brian McLaren’s recent book, *The Great Spiritual Migration*. In it, he doesn’t call for change. He simply points out that change in Christianity is already underway. He invites us to explore how some of the greatest spiritual energy these days – in this nation and around the world – is happening beyond the established church’s priorities and programs. Such transformations and “Great Awakenings” are nothing new; they’ve happened time and again across 20 centuries of Christianity, and in the eras of God’s interactions with God’s people prior to the Incarnation. It is perhaps uncomfortable yet can be very rewarding to discern where God is already at work in the Church and in the culture, then to jump on board. The related “Way of Life” Bible Study is timely, and I hope quite a number of us will take part in those discussions (which start Sunday morning, September 11). As I have read the book and previewed the 12-15 minute video lessons, I see a tone of great hope amid all the change and disruption. God is at work, working out divine purposes, and inviting us – individually and in our Christ-centered groupings – to find our niche amidst the Lord’s plans and actions.

I am not calling for a total transformation of everything we hold dear. Neither does McLaren. I do not believe that our Lord mandates that either. We are moving into a new future. It HAS to be a new future; there absolutely is no such thing as an “old future”. There just isn’t. The days ahead will be different than the same days of three years ago, and different than 30 years ago. Yet, that need not be scary. Our Lord is present with us during uncertain days and blessed seasons. If it is God’s future, we will be OK. If it is God’s future, we will thrive!

We have an important event upcoming the First Wednesday of September. Those conversations are one event amid an ongoing process of discernment and decision-making. As we make plans and commitments, we are going to discuss our wishes and dreams and preferences. The Lord uses *all* of those. Still, as our leaders have challenged us to do throughout 2022, we do well to pray for – and listen to – God’s plans and priorities for this church. Often, because we are people of faith and trust, our priorities and God’s will match up very well. If there is a difference between the two, or a lack of clarity and consensus among us, then that indicates the calling to pray even more and to listen even more.

Together, the people of FUPC have accomplished great things, old and familiar and untested and new. That is part of the story which has brought us through past difficulties and social changes. As we meet this coming week, and as we pray for God’s guidance and blessing, there is much more for the people of this congregation to accomplish in the months and years to come.

Jesus’ Peace & Hope & Joy, **Greg**

* P.S. I have said this before in other contexts, but I think it is significant that we have organized our FUPC structure with *Ministry Teams* rather than *Committees*. (That happened long before my arrival here, so I take no credit, but I simply observe – and applaud.) It’s too simplistic to put too much emphasis on this distinction, but it can be a profitable reminder: *Committees* meet...*Teams* play. Presbyterian processes are rife with stereotypes about committee meetings, and such stereotypes are inexact but somewhat based in truth. Effective entities turn their people loose to “play the game”. When they work well, Ministry Teams are on “the field”, out there *doing* what their talents and preparations have readied. Our *Teams* sing the songs, carry out the local mission, connect with our young families, and visit those who are lonely or hospitalized or troubled. “Go, Team!”

We meet, but the purpose of meetings is not to meet. The purpose of each meeting is mission.

What form of communication helps FUPC to best connect with you and your household?

This summer, we experimented with sending the Presby Press monthly newsletter by mail to everyone on our distribution list, even those who ordinarily receive church publications via e-mail. The curiosity was whether having a tangible, on-paper update would be more helpful to people, rather than needing to check e-mail and open a document and then read the news on a screen. We were not certain whether the e-mailed newsletter was being shared with everyone in multi-person households.

Moving forward, we want to make our communication solid throughout the church, but also convenient for each of our friends and members. Would you please drop a note to the office, or call or e-mail: *Do we have your up-to-date address? Has anyone in the household changed addresses or e-mails? Do you like a paper copy? Do you prefer an e-mailed attachment? Would it be better to have the stories and pictures included in the body of an e-mail (rather than an attached PDF)? Is it easy for you to look up the newsletter and other documents from the News tab of the website? How can we help you to be informed and inspired?*

September Mission of the Month



The 47th Erie County CROP Walk will take place Sunday, September 25, once again starting in the Beach #1 parking lot at Presque Isle State Park. All funds raised through the Walk address hunger issues here in our area and around the world.

Last year our local Walk was ranked #1 in the state and #11 in the U.S. in terms of funds raised. It was Presbyterian congregations who led the way, raising just about half of the Walk total of just over \$61,000. Eight Erie County Presbyterian congregations are so far signed up for the 2022 Walk.

Donations may also be dropped off or mailed to the church through the month of September. Please make checks payable to First United Presbyterian Church. You also can join or donate to FUPC's team through the Erie CROP Walk webpage. It gives you the option to sponsor any of our walkers with your hunger-fighting donation, or you can register to be one of our walkers:

[2022 CROP Hunger Walk - EdinboroFirstPresby](#)

Garden of Edin Update: Donations to the Edinboro Food Pantry



The total amount of produce that has been donated to the **Edinboro Food Pantry** to date this growing season is **309.4 pounds!** Most of this abundance comes from four "tithe" beds (10% of 40 beds) that are exclusively grown for the Food Pantry. Also, many of the other thirty-six gardeners at Edinboro's Community Garden have generously donated produce from their own personal garden beds!! We are so grateful to all the gardeners in the Garden of Edin!

[See updated photos from the Garden on their Facebook or linked from the church website](#)

10 AM worship continues during Labor Day Weekend

September 11 we switch to 11 AM

Also on the 11th, we begin a new Bible Study for teens and adults, at 9:30 AM

Our sanctuary worship will begin at 10 AM during Labor Day Weekend on September 4. The return to 11 AM will begin on the following Sunday, September 11. **Worship Online** will continue to provide recorded worship experiences 24/7 at www.EdinboroPresby.org/videos.



See our suggested resources for parents, teens and children, collected in a new section of the congregation's website: RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES at www.EdinboroPresby.org

Natalie Goedertze
TF Santiago
APO, AE 09348



Thank you so much for all the wonderful cookies! They were very quick to go once we put them out for all the Soldiers to eat. We certainly appreciate the thoughtfulness and the hard work put into baking those cookies. They brightened our day + filled our stomachs! Thank you again for your support.
-Natalie

Cookies For Troops

Thank you to the faithful bakers at FUPC. Our efforts continue to be appreciated by the brave men and women serving our country when we send boxes of home-baked cookies each month. If you would like to take part in this mission by baking four dozen cookies (per month, or just one time), please contact coordinator Sue Johnson at the church office, 814-734-3511 or office@EdinboroPresby.org.

The troops are faithful in telling of their gratitude for this outreach. Here is our most recent Thank You note.

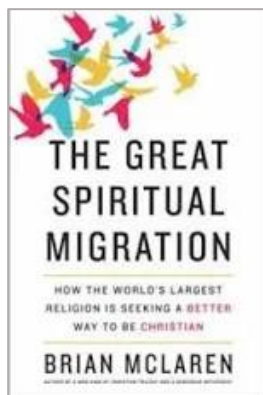
Sunday Bible Study (with an online option too)

A Way of Life: The Great Spiritual Migration

The Christian story, from Genesis until now, is fundamentally about people on the move—outgrowing old, broken religious systems and embracing new, more redemptive ways of life. It's time to move again.

Brian McLaren, a leading voice in contemporary spirituality and religion, contends that— notwithstanding the dire headlines about the demise of faith and drop in church attendance— Christian faith is not dying. Rather, it is embarking on a once-in-an-era spiritual shift. For millions, the journey has already begun.

McLaren invites readers to seize the moment. A significant spiritual pilgrimage is now available to enhance our own faith and increase the impact of the Church. Drawing from his work as global activist, pastor, and public theologian, McLaren challenges readers to stop worrying, waiting, and indulging in nostalgia, and instead, to embrace powerful new understandings that are reshaping the church. In **The Great Spiritual Migration**, he explores three shifts that define these changes:



- **Spiritually:** growing numbers of Christians are moving away from defining themselves by lists of beliefs and toward a way of life defined by love
- **Theologically:** believers are increasingly embracing an image of God as the renewing Spirit at work in our world for the common good
- **Missionally:** faithful people (and searchers) are identifying less with *organized* religion and more with *organizing* religion—building peace, overcoming poverty and injustice, and collaborating with others

Edinboro Presbyterian will use McLaren's video Bible Study from this book for four Sunday mornings starting September 11 at 9:30. Each Sunday we will watch a short video by McLaren, the Pastor Greg will lead our conversation and contemplation until 10:30. Those who prefer an online version of this study can request it through the church office. Books are available but are not necessary for our local study.

“Save the Dates” for upcoming fun in October at FUPC Edinboro

Edinboro Presbyterian’s Deacons are preparing for a couple of big events next month at FUPC, one continuing a long-standing tradition, the other a new outreach for younger families in our communities.

“Spuds-n-Suds” Luncheon Sunday, October 23, noon

The annual Deacons’ Baked Potato bar will follow Sunday sanctuary worship on October 23. The typical variety of tasty toppings will be available. Our version of “Suds” is bottled premium root beer. Your donations beyond the cost of the food are used to replenish the Deacons Fund. Throughout each year, that money is used to provide immediate emergency help with food and clothing, to buy and repair hospital equipment for our loaner program, and so the Deacons can do carrying outreach to FUPC members and friends. If you can help provide toppings, assist in the kitchen or be on the clean-up or set-up crews, please let Linda Rummel know of your availability.

Children & Family Halloween Event Sunday afternoon, October 30

On the last Sunday of October, plan for a simple, fun event for children. This afternoon event will include some treats and some memory-making. This will be promoted to the community, and children with direct connections to FUPC are certainly invited as well. Watch for upcoming details. If you are willing to help carry out this event or be available to simply greet and chat with the parents and other guests, speak with Jan Schulz or Pauline Krause.

Let us help you get your child safety clearances updates

Like all other agencies, schools, sports leagues and businesses which serve children and teens, Pennsylvania’s Christian congregations need to align with church policies and state law regarding background clearance checks. Due to the interruptions of the past couple of years, some staff and volunteers with such entities have allowed their clearances to lapse.

It is important to remember that such clearances are not just a “hoop” to jump through. These processes and policies have legal ramifications, to protect the children and the church, but also to protect the reputations of each of our volunteers. The biggest reason to keep our clearances up to date is even more important: when we demonstrate that we are attentive to the safety of the children entrusted to us, this become a very significant consideration for parents and families which are deciding which congregation to attend, or whether they will plug into a church or not.

Clearances are needed whether you help with on an ongoing basis or for a one-time activity. Further information is [here](#), and the process can be completed online [here](#). Be sure to indicate that you are a “Volunteer” and there is no cost for the clearances. Email a copy of the resulting report or drop it by the FUPC office, where it will be maintained confidentially in a locked file. Renewals are required every five years. Contact the pastor or an elder if you have questions or need help to update your clearances.

Presby Press is the monthly newsletter for our members, friends, and the community at-large.

For the summer, we are sending copies via postal mail, even to those who are on our e-mail distribution list. Let us know your preferences.

Archived newsletters are available on the website. All information is provided as general information. We cannot and do not replace medical, tax, legal or financial professionals who should give you specific advice for your unique personal situation. Only the Session (Council of Elders) can make official statements or positions of this congregation.

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